

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."

All the Year Round

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RICHENDA.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

SIR RODERICK GRAEME was alone in the smoking-room of his flat. The absence of his fellow owner had developed into an unexpected journey to South Africa, which had brought his share in the joint house-keeping to an end. And Sir Roderick's own tenancy was almost at an end also. Only three days of it remained to him. In three days he was going to leave everything that had hitherto made up his life, and begin a new life, on wholly new lines, by himself, in Queensland.

Very rarely indeed had Sir Roderick's "set" had so interesting a topic on which to speculate as that afforded them by this unexpected departure. When Sir Roderick first announced his intention to his friends he became, forthwith, a sort of nine days' wonder, to be discussed incessantly. His men friends decided with unanimity that Sir Roderick must be "short of cash" to a serious extent, and preferred this desperate step to the announcement of that fact. The women who knew him preferred a less prosaic theory. He must, they reasoned, have had some sort of "disappointment." But when, following classic advice, they proceeded to "look for the woman," no woman presented herself to their minds as the heroine of Sir Roderick's romance. He knew and was known to many girls and women; but not one could be singled out as having been lately distinguished by any special attention on his part. Nevertheless, they, in the absence of any other, held firmly to their theory.

Questions without end had been addressed to Sir Roderick on the subject. To each and all he had one simple answer. He thought he "would try a change," he said. And nothing more was to be extracted from him.

Even if Sir Roderick had been willing, he might have found it difficult to supply his friends with his reason. For though this was very firmly established in his own mind, it would not easily have allowed itself to be reduced to words. It would not have been easy to explain that he was going to Queensland because the world, and everything in it, had been turned to dust and ashes for him by the change it had brought about in Richenda Leicester.

Since the August evening, now nearly eight months ago, when he had set himself to work to decide finally, whether he should or should not ask Richenda Leicester to be his wife, Sir Roderick's mental and moral perceptions had been ground into a new sensitiveness by a relentlessly grinding mill.

He had made his decision, and once made it had brought him a keen sense of hitherto unknown happiness. He had not gone to bed at all on that August night for thinking of the future that lay, as he hoped, before Richenda and himself. His scruples as to marrying out of his own "set," when once overcome, were banished wholly. In the reaction that followed them, he only wondered how he could ever have cherished any such scruples.

He had set forth, on the following afternoon, in as much hope as it is possible for a modest man to know, to plead his cause with Richenda. He had come away, bewildered, angry with himself, and sobered by an unavailing and hopeless regret. For the shock that awaited him, in the news

of Richenda's fortune, he had been, naturally, so utterly unprepared, that, at first, the mere announcement itself overwhelmed him. It was some time before he could even realise the fact which Richenda imparted to him.

But directly he did realise it, he realised also that he was too late. In the wild whirl of his thoughts, that was the only thing he could understand. How could he propose to her now? he said to himself bitterly. The girl to whom he had gone, intending to offer her, together with himself, all the advantages of position, money, and freedom from anxiety, was a rich woman now, who could provide herself with all these things; who could place at her feet the world into which he had intended to lead her as his wife. He had stood aloof from her in her poverty and her obscurity; he had felt something like contempt for her position when he might have altered it for her; and now, she was out of his reach, and he could do nothing to bring her back. He had been reluctant to show to the nurse any sign of what he had felt for her; he certainly could not now claim the heiress. He had lost his opportunity—lost it for ever. As he took his departure from the red-brick villa, the thought haunted him with a bitter persistency that did not lessen during the days that followed.

It was to hide from the eyes of his friends his bewilderment, his self-condemnation, and his shattered castles in the air, that he hurried on, by many days, his departure from town for Scotland. There, on his own estate, he had spent the autumn with scarcely a single guest to break the monotony of his days; and he had, later, amazed his factor by proposing, for the first time since he had been in possession, to spend Christmas in his own house, and alone. Throughout every one of his lonely days and weeks, his thoughts had been full of Richenda. He was not one iota less in love with her. He had come away from the red-brick villa loving her more than ever, and longing a thousand times more to have her for his own, now that she was so hopelessly out of his reach. And love and longing increased daily in intensity during his self-chosen exile.

He took care, during those months, to keep himself, indirectly, informed of Richenda's doings. But there came a day when second-hand accounts of her availed him not at all. He felt, all at once, that he must at least see her, from whatever

distance it might be, for himself, once more. So, with scant announcement of his intention, he left Scotland and returned to London. Among the letters he found awaiting him on his arrival, was an invitation from Richenda herself to an evening "at home." It was not the first communication he had received from her. More than one invitation had followed him to Scotland, to be successively declined in Sir Roderick's stiffest writing and phraseology. But he answered this one in the affirmative. He decided that it was in her daily surroundings he would first see again for himself the girl who held, for all time, his heart in her keeping.

On that night he received a shock even more severe in its effect upon him than the announcement of Richenda's wealth had been. He found that the Richenda he had known had vanished as completely as if she had been a creation of his fancy.

He met, instead, a woman whose ways, manner, and appearance were all strange and unreal to him. The simple, innocent-minded girl he had known was changed into a perfect copy of the smart, frivolous women among whom his life had been spent. There was nothing distinctive about Richenda now. The girl of those days was utterly merged in the fashionable woman of these.

He had scarcely recovered from this shock when a greater one met him. He discovered that Fergus Kennaway filled the place in which he had once hoped to stand. And the thought that Richenda should have so altered and so deteriorated as to allow a man who had treated her as Kennaway had done, to claim her love, was the hardest blow of all to Sir Roderick.

He had gone to see Richenda on the following afternoon because he had been unable to believe his senses; because he wanted to learn for himself if his Richenda really had developed into the woman he had seen as his hostess. That call had assured him as fully as he needed, that the incredible was the true. And the mill of disillusionment had rolled round its hardest turn that day.

It never occurred to his simple mind to leave off loving Richenda. He did not blame her; he did not feel any resentment towards her; on the contrary, he loved her only more. His disappointment in her did not react at all on the image of her in his mind; it acted on him peculiarly, perhaps, but its immediate effect was to fill him with intense distaste for the men

and women who made up his world. All at once, his eyes seemed to be opened to all the worst faults and follies of the life he had always shared, his perceptions seemed preternaturally sensitive to its weaknesses. If, he argued, a short contact with his world could so transform the simplest, sweetest woman he had ever known, what must be the characters of the units who made up that world? Sir Roderick, who had never before analysed motive or action of man or woman, now looked into every detail of all the lives around him, and found them one and all unsatisfactory.

His only consolation in these days was Jack Leicester's friendship. The boy was "too young to be spoiled yet," he said. And it was to Jack he first confided a project that had occurred to him. He had felt, on the January day which brought him the definite announcement of Richenda's engagement to Fergus Kennaway, that he could bear no more of his present existence. He would go somewhere away from every one he had known—somewhere where he could be quite alone, and where he could spend his days in real, honest hard work in a life about which there could be no shadow of deception or pretence. So he took the necessary steps for establishing himself alone in Queensland.

He had arranged everything so that he should be out of England before Richenda's wedding-day. And he had looked forward to his departure with a certain grim contentment.

Out of this he had been rudely shaken by Jack's story, and Jack's appeal for his help. All his great love for Richenda had seemed to surge into passion as he thought of her as suffering, and deceived. He never once thought, as he helped Jack throughout the details of proving Fergus Kennaway guilty, that it was just and right that she—the woman who had so disappointed him—should be herself tortured on the same rack. He never felt himself avenged; he never triumphed. He only felt an intense love and the tenderest pity, which culminated on the day when he stood before her, to find her white, helpless, and crushed with wounded pride, while he confirmed Jack in his tidings.

It was a fortnight now since that day, and he had seen nothing of Richenda, of course, during that time. He had questioned Jack sedulously about her, and had received always the same answer: "She's awfully wretched, but she won't say so, or let me say so."

He would have given all he was worth for the right to avenge Richenda. But he had no shadow of such a right, and he had had to content himself with cutting Kennaway openly and ostentatiously. He was thinking now, as he sat alone in his room, as he had thought in every hour of every day of the last fortnight—of Richenda. But he was not thinking now of her unhappiness only; he was wondering how he could get through what lay immediately before him—the task of saying good-bye to her. He had ended almost every one of his preparations for departure now, even to the burning of his old letters and memoranda, whose fragments lay in confusion round him at this moment; and all his farewell calls were paid, save two: a good-bye visit he had promised to make to the nursery at Bryanston Street, and his good-bye to Richenda.

It was four o'clock and more, and he ought, he knew, to have set forth half an hour ago. This was his only opportunity of carrying out his intention of seeing Richenda face to face for the last time; the two following days were filled to the utmost with business engagements.

Over and over again he had tried to rouse himself, and failed. He could not bring himself to take this last step of renunciation. Richenda was not ever to be his; and yet he could not bear finally to cut the feeble link of propinquity that held them together. The clock on the mantelpiece ticked on and on resonantly. Sir Roderick stared at it blankly. At length, as it struck the half-hour he started up hastily.

"I shall never do it, if I stay thinking any longer," he said. "I'll go and get the children over first, and then—I'll do it!"

CHAPTER XXV.

"WE'VE got a dreadful lot of sorries, now!"

It was an hour later, and Sir Roderick and the Fitzgerald children, having just ended their farewell tea together, were sitting in the Bryanston Street nursery. The exclamation was Veronica's; and it was accompanied by a heavy sigh.

"What's the matter, pray?"

"You know—at least you know you're going. And that's a very greatest sorry!"

Veronica's sigh here received a heartfelt echo from Brian and Dolly.

"Then," she went on, in a piteous small voice, "we've not seen Darling for ever and

ever so long ! She doesn't never ask us to lunch, now ! And, then, it is so very unhappying that she's not going to have her marrying ! Me and Dolly was going to be brides, and we had got such pretty frocks ; blue, and bonnets ! And Brian had got a white velvet suit for a page ! And we can't wear them because Mr. Kennaway isn't going to do the marrying. Oh, godfather ! " — Veronica had been sitting on half Sir Roderick's chair, with one arm round his neck. Now she jumped up, as if struck by a sudden idea. " Godfather dear ! " she cried. " You always, always do what we ask you. Won't you do Darling's marrying instead of Mr. Kennaway ? Then we could be brides and wear our frocks and Brian's suit ! Oh, do, do, do ! "

Veronica's last words became an eager scream. She was engrossed in her plan, and Sir Roderick's movement was so abrupt as to startle her greatly.

He rose hastily, and put the child down from him.

" Don't talk nonsense, Veronica ! " he said, almost sharply. " Give me a kiss, all of you. I'm very busy, and I must go ! "

With a puzzled sense that something "naughty" had been done by some one, and a still more puzzling sense of the general incomprehensibleness of "grown-up" people, the children looked out of the nursery window to see Sir Roderick get into a passing hansom.

" It's the last time, " he muttered to himself as, arrived at Miss Leicester's door, he tossed the cabman double his fare. " Neither he nor any one else on earth will ever drive me to her house again ! "

It was a perfect spring evening. The trees in Kensington Gardens were plainly visible from where he stood, with their branches and twigs softened by the tinge of the coming green. The delicate tracerу stood out against an evening sky, at the present a soft daffodil colour, with just a foretaste of the coming red of the sunset thrown across it by the lowering sun. There was the softness of spring in the air ; that softness which, even in London, brings a sort of suggestion of warmth and hopefulness. But there was no echo, in poor Sir Roderick's mind, of any suggestion of hopefulness.

He was entering upon what was, to him, the most cruel and the most difficult duty that had placed itself before him in all his life. He gave an absolute sigh of relief when he found that the drawing-

room into which he was shown was empty, and that therefore a short respite was before him.

Richenda Leicester's drawing-room was looking its prettiest in the spring evening light ; and the air was heavy and sweet with the scent of the spring flowers which were all about it.

But Sir Roderick scarcely cast one glance about him. The room was, for him, too full of the memory of that afternoon when Jack had brought him into it to meet Richenda in her misery. And he walked abruptly across it to a window, whence he was gazing with unseeing eyes at the people moving through the red sunlight in the road below, when the door of the anteroom opened with a little click. Sir Roderick turned sharply, just in time to face Miss Leicester as she put aside the curtains that draped the entrance to the larger room.

Richenda was very pale ; indeed, it seemed as if no vestige of colour ever could come back to that dead white face. There were heavy dark shadows under her eyes, and the clear light showed that the beautiful eyes themselves were dim and heavy. She was wearing a thick, dark woollen dress, in which her slight form seemed even slenderer than was its wont.

" It is very good of you to see me, " Sir Roderick began awkwardly, as she gave him her hand without speaking. " I hope you are better ? "

" I am quite well, thank you, " she said, in a perfectly expressionless voice which yet sounded very tired. " Won't you sit down ? " she added.

She seated herself as she spoke in a chair near to the window, and Sir Roderick mechanically obeyed her, and placed himself opposite to her.

" It is very good of you, " Richenda said formally, " to take the trouble to come and say good-bye. I think you said in your note that you were going to Queensland ? "

" To Queensland."

Sir Roderick tried his best, but no effort on his part would furnish him with another word. His abrupt answer spoken, he sat gazing at the floor without lifting his head.

" You are leaving England for good ? "

Richenda's quietly spoken question broke a little pause, but Sir Roderick had no conception of this fact. He was wholly concentrated on maintaining enough self-control to enable him to get creditably through the duty which was growing, every

moment, more difficult to him. He was struggling, and struggling violently, with an impulse which had arisen in him at the sight of Richenda. Over and over he repeated to himself that it was a mad impulse; that he was losing his head; that he must and would hold his tongue at all costs. But he longed suddenly, with an almost overpowering longing, to break through all conventionalities and tell her, simply, all that he had felt for her from the beginning of their acquaintance, and to ask her to forgive him for all that had been mean and unworthy on his part. Not to propose to her. Of that he never dreamed. He only wanted, as he said to himself, to tell her all about it before he went.

It was only by a great effort that he smothered these feelings, and found voice to say in a matter-of-fact tone:

"Yes. I am going for good."

Richenda made no response, and a little silence fell on the two. A sense of the absolute necessity of finding something to say, if he wished to control that impulse of which he was moment by moment more painfully conscious, made Sir Roderick break it.

"I shall miss your brother most awfully," he said, with an excessive cheeriness that was the result of his efforts to speak easily and naturally. "He and I have become great chums, you know—no, you don't know, though. How should you?"

"Indeed, I do know," Richenda said, and there was more animation in her voice than she had displayed at all before. "You've been very good to Jack, and he will miss you terribly."

Sir Roderick's effort at deprecation of this died away in a confused murmur, and scarcely thinking of his words he plunged suddenly into another subject.

"I've been saying good-bye to the children—your—the Fitzgerald children, you know," he said. "I'm really awfully sorry to see the last of them—jolly little beggars!"

Richenda's face also had been bent steadily on the floor. As Sir Roderick spoke she lifted it very abruptly.

"Yes," she said, in a voice that sounded strained and a little absent. "Yes. I'm sure they'll miss you. I expect they were very sorry, weren't they?"

About the corners of Richenda's mouth there was an odd little weary droop. It grew more and more perceptible as she spoke. Sir Roderick had, he told himself,

not seen how tired and ill she looked until now; and into his mind there came a vivid picture of the long past day by the Serpentine, when she had looked weary and worried, and he had comforted her. He would have given years of his life for the right to comfort her now. He abused his own folly in recalling that day by the mention of the children; and then, suddenly feeling in the tumult of his emotions quite unable to keep an impassive countenance, he rose abruptly and unceremoniously from his chair, and walking to the window, turned his back upon his hostess and stared out of it in silence. He had not a thought to spare for Richenda's probable amazement at his proceedings. He was wholly occupied for the moment in mastering himself.

"I wish I were their nurse again!"

The words came with a choked, sobbing sigh from Richenda's chair.

Sir Roderick started as if he had been shot. He turned round with a very hasty movement. Richenda, whom he had last seen sitting decorously upright in her low chair, had let her head fall forward on to her hands, and between her fingers tears were falling thick and fast on to her brown dress. He cleared the space between them in two strides.

"Miss Leicester!" he said, in anxiously harassed tones. "What can I do? What have I done? May I fetch Jack? Any one, or anything?"

His anxious voice seemed only to distress her yet more, for she sobbed almost chokingly for some moments.

"No! No!" she sobbed at last. "You can't; you needn't do anything. I'm so sorry. I never meant to—to cry. It's only—it's only that I've made a great mistake of my life, somehow, and I am very miserable—and very—— And now you're going away!"

Sir Roderick had been standing anxious, humble, and awkwardly helpless at Richenda's side. At the last half-whispered words, he knelt down by her side very hastily. His pale face was all strained and working with uncontrollable emotion and excitement.

"Miss Leicester," he said, as well as he could for his quick, gasping breaths, "will you tell me what you mean? What you have said is everything or worse than nothing to me. Tell me."

There was a long silence.

"I never, never meant to," Richenda sobbed. "But you're going away, and I

don't—I don't know what I shall do when you're gone."

"I shall never go."

Sir Roderick took Richenda's hands from her face, and she hid its tear-stains on his shoulder.

Veronica and Dolly were both "brides," and Brian wore a velvet suit as a page.

The children never come away from Lady Graeme's house now, without an argument as to which of them it was to whom the idea of asking Sir Roderick to "do the marrying" first occurred. Sir Roderick's own definite statement that the idea had first been his own property, makes no impression whatever upon them.

Jack Leicester, for whom the children quickly conceived a close friendship, confided to Veronica once, by way of making peace in one of these discussions, that it had also occurred to him. But he was received with scorn.

THE DRAMATIC CENSORSHIP.

THE death of the late Mr. E. F. Smyth Pigott, the Lord Chamberlain's Examiner of Plays, and the keen competition which has taken place for the vacant post, have brought the whole question of the licensing of plays—and, for the matter of that, of places of public entertainment—into prominence once more. A bitter newspaper fight has been going on among the critics, and, as is always noticeable in every controversy about theatrical matters, the conflict has been more remarkable for hard hitting and hard words than for the softening of manners and the absence of ferocity which the Latin writer, in the innocence of his heart, erroneously supposed to be the outcome of a diligent study of the ingenuous arts.

On the face of it there seems to be no reason why one should not keep one's temper when one is discussing the question whether the State should impose any restraint upon the manner in which the public is to be provided with amusement, and, if so, what it should be and how far it should go. Neither is it clear why the discussion over the merits or demerits of a dramatist like Henrik Ibsen should make the disputants foam at the mouth and rage like inhabitants of the dangerous wards in Bedlam. But these things are so, nevertheless, and it is not a little significant that the only people who have thought it

fair or decent at the late Licensor's coffin are to be found in the ranks of the confirmed Ibsenites. Mr. Pigott did not like Ibsen. Once upon a time he said: "I have studied Ibsen's plays pretty carefully, and all the characters in Ibsen's plays appear to me morally deranged. All the heroines are dissatisfied spinsters who look on marriage as a monopoly, or dissatisfied married women in a chronic state of rebellion against not only the conditions which nature has imposed on their sex, but against all the duties and obligations of mothers and wives. As for the men, they are all rascals or imbeciles." Furthermore, he said that he had licensed the plays because he considered them to be too absurd to do any harm. With these opinions some people will agree altogether, some partially, and some in no wise, but they do not, in any case, justify the bestrewal of Mr. Pigott's grave with such flowers of speech as "a walking compendium of vulgar insular prejudice," "his official career in relation to the higher drama was one long folly and panic," "stupendously incompetent," "immoral balderdash," "the vulgar hands of such a noodle as this amiable old gentleman, this despised and incapable old official, most notoriously was," which occur in an article by Mr. Bernard Shaw in the "Saturday Review." That the redoubtable G. B. S. does not like Mr. Pigott's office is quite conceivable, and, indeed, natural; but it is a pity that, finding himself short of arguments against it, he should have relied upon what is, after all, mere Billingsgate abuse of a dead man. Probably Mr. Shaw did not know Mr. Pigott. To those who did—and I am one of them—the "Saturday Review" outcry is quite as grotesque as it is unjust. And this is saying a great deal.

How weak the argument against the Censorship is, is to be found in the fact that Mr. Shaw offers to produce "a staggering list of authors who have not written for the theatre since the evil day when Walpole established the Censorship to prevent Fielding from exposing the corruption of Parliament on the stage," a proposal which reminds one of the criminal who opposed to the witness of his theft the testimony of a dozen of his friends who swore that they did not see him commit it. Is there any evidence of any distinguished writer who was prevented from writing for the stage because of the existence of the Licensor of Plays? I, at least, have never heard of one. Nor is Mr. Shaw even consistent.

"Fielding never wrote another play," he says, "and from his time to that of Dickens, who was once very fond of the stage"—why "once"!—"a comparison of our literature with our drama shows a relative poverty and inferiority on the part of the latter not to be paralleled in any of the countries where the Censor only interferes on political grounds." But we have it on Mr. Shaw's own evidence that the Censorship was instituted by Walpole to deal with Fielding on political grounds.

It is sometimes—often, indeed—said that a Censorship such as that which deals with the theatre would not be allowed to last for a week if it were applied to other forms of literature and art; and the statement may be true, although, in face of the perfect apathy and indifference of the public to the Lord Chamberlain and all his works, I doubt it. But it must not be forgotten that the law steps in, very effectually sometimes, in the case of published books and exhibited pictures which are held to be immoral or improper. Poor Mr. Vizetelly, I should think, after his sentence of fine and imprisonment for having published translations of some of Zola's books, must often have meditated on the advantages of a Censorship which stops you at the outset, over one which waits until you have completed your publication, and then pounces on you with unsheathed claws and gleaming, murderous teeth.

The apathy and indifference of the public at large on this question is, I think, mainly to be found in the fact that the opponents of the Censorship have never been able to produce, and support their arguments with, any work of art of which it can honestly be said that the refusal of its license was not perfectly justifiable. Some few plays which Mr. Pigott refused to license have been published, but the public has shown no disposition to look upon their authors as martyrs, or, indeed, to consider them unfairly treated at all. On the other hand, many plays have been licensed of late years which have impressed the public with the idea that the Examiner of Plays was, if any particular fault could be found with him, far too amiable and easy. And it is not uninstructive to note that, with one brilliant exception, these plays have not been found in any special degree attractive or remunerative. Furthermore, I think that the public perceives that if the Licensor of Plays goes, so, logically, must also go the Licensers of Theatres and Music Halls, and that thus all managers of places of public

entertainment will be left to do just what they like, and, perceiving the fact, is not at all prepared to face the consequences.

THE ABBEY OF DEADLY NIGHTSHADE.

BARROW-IN-FURNESS is almost American in its energy, in the sense of rapid growth that pervades it—growth yet far from completed—in its broad thoroughfares, and its ugliness. But it is scoured by the sea breezes, and it has the famous Abbey in its Glen of the Deadly Nightshade, accessible from the heart of the town by a steam tramway. They are an able-looking people, these of Barrow, and it is not the fault of their vicinity if their strength of body and will is not graced and refined by nature and art.

The road from the town to the Abbey is on a hot day an insufferable one to the pedestrian. In time it will—if the sea winds will let it—have shade in the stripling trees set along the straight white highway. But the time is a decade or two distant. Years are necessary, moreover, to soften the staring newness of the villa residences which stretch far from the shops and red tenements of the town's business centre. An accredited æsthete would shudder to live in such a quarter. Even the joys of electric light would not seem to him much compensation. The hard white road and the jarring of the trams outside the house would add to his discomfort. I suppose the periodical procession of greasy-jacketed dock operatives, and nursemaids, and children, towards the shrine of the Abbey might be coupled with these other sources of spiritual shock. While, lastly, there are plenty of advertisement hoardings with their various pictorial delights. One may read poetry on these unsightly wooden walls. Here is a specimen of it:

Get married and furnish at Wood's,
Or emigrate and sell your goods.

This, too, has the American tone. It is not at all in keeping with the drowsy peace and inertia of the precincts of the Abbey to Our Lady in Deadly Nightshade Glen, hard by.

But it is just such a place as Barrow that may be best profited by the suggestive ruins of a building like the Abbey. Annex them to a tranquil cathedral city, and their value would sink by one-half. The Benedictines and Cistercians of Furness have done more good with their noble,

embellished building in these latter years than they could have foreseen.

The better way to approach the Abbey is to go by train to it direct, without entering Barrow. Then one steps from the railway carriage into the sequestered, cup-shaped hollow, thick in trees and populous with disestablished walls, and straightway breathes the sweet if rather relaxing air of monastic tranquillity. There is nothing discordant in the Abbey glen. An hotel stands in the old conventional domain, built of certain of the Abbey materials and certain others well in harmony with them; else one sees nothing but a rich comminglement of soaring fragments of chiselled stone, emerald-hued grass and trees worthy of an untroubled wood, with hawthorn, elder, and briar rose in dense brakes. One thing only is missed to make the scene perfect of its kind. There is here no crystalline river to add its murmur to that of the wind in the trees. The ditch that traverses the so-called ancient Guest Hall is quite otherwise than a thing of beauty. Even the children who come hither from Barrow's back streets do not paddle in the ditch. They prefer to take off their shoes and stockings and roam in the long grass of the courtyard of the cloisters. One cannot conceive that this poor little brook was ever fit to be mentioned in the same breath with the rivers that charm at Buildwas, Fountains, Tintern, Melrose, and our many other abbeyed retreats. To be sure, the sea is not remote. But there is no suggestion of it in this hot recess absorbed almost wholly by the Abbey buildings and enclosures.

Sycamores grow well here, as in the Lake District to the north. Their bossy outlines contrast well with the rugged configuration of the walls of the Abbey, whose subdued pink flush goes admirably with the omnipresent verdure.

There is nothing obtrusive here. The custodian of the little photograph shop by the entrance gate does not press purchases upon the visitor; he prefers, on a July day, to enjoy his cool nook un vexed by rebuffs. Further, there are two or three uniformed officials who go and come among the ruins; bronzing in the sun and resting momentarily in the shade. Their duty is a necessary one. But it does not seem as if enlightened Barrow turns out the usual proportion of ruin despoilers. True, the choicer work of the capitals and sedilia is not within reach; yet there is scope enough left for mischief. The Abbey's

modern patrons, however, appear to love it too well to harm it. They may be seen lying on its grass, or picnicking in its refectory, using as seats the stumps of the pillars that once supported its ceiling. Otherwise they treat it with a respect bordering upon reverence. The gentlemen with the gilt buttons go to and fro yawning in the heat, as eager, apparently, for a little desultory conversation with a stranger as the immortal Wearyworld, and almost nervous with pleasure if the visitor be of the kind who wish to see everything at close quarters, and coax padlocks to open with silver pieces.

One must go far to match the majesty of the broken windows of the Furness Abbey Church. The Church was not large, measured by cathedral standards: some two hundred and seventy-five feet by sixty-five. But it must have been gloriously flooded with light from the gigantic eastern window, which touches what one may conjecture to have been the roof-line. The arch dividing the choir from the nave is of a magnitude in harmony with the windows. It makes one feel very small as one stands at the grill which now protects the Abbots' tombs and the sedilia from destructive hands and feet. But the longer one stands in appreciation of it, the more one is prone to forgive the huge window its curious assault upon the self-esteem of the individual.

The majority of the Abbey's visitors care little to be told that the Transitional and Perpendicular styles of architecture are here splendidly illustrated. Their indifference does not seem to matter very much. An ironworker takes his pipe from his mouth while he gazes at the fern-decked wall of the south transept. Afterwards he looks around for a sympathetic ear, to which he confides his conviction that "you're a big 'un." Two girls in pale blue blouses roam arm-in-arm across the grass of the nave, which has a blue ceiling in the sky. They carry scarlet sunshades, and make a strong show of colour. Perhaps they are milliners out for a holiday; perhaps they areheiresses. The one murmurs to the other, "Isn't it nice?" as they step towards the cloisters, upon which the afternoon sun burns like fire. And a married couple may be seen ensconced on the north side of the Abbot's private chapel, with a shawl spread upon the sloping sward for the baby to roll on. Periodically they issue orders to their larger infants, who have a tendency to break bounds. But for the

most part they sit side by side in contemplative calmness, with their hands folded in front of them, blinking at the sunshine on the grass, and wiping their moist faces. This, too, is enjoyment. It were a waste of energy to talk to any of these of "sept-foiled arches," "ogee mouldings," or "diamond-formed finials." I am not, perhaps, very wrong in thinking that few people like even their descriptive literature to be so closely pictorial. It is a hard strain upon the mind, and often next to nothing comes of it.

However, even those who are ignorant of architectural "technique" may enjoy the beauty of the Chapter House at Furness. This, for a ruin, is excellently preserved. Its grouped and fluted columns still lift themselves towards the heavens, and but little mere imaginative power is needful to recreate the scenes it witnessed when the Abbot and the superior brethren here assembled to transact business, and welcome such visitors as Magnus, King of Man, and passing travellers of undeniable distinction. Furness was in the Middle Ages rather too remote from Court centres to be often a recipient of the doubtful blessing of Royal calls. But one may assume that its hospitality would in such cases be proportioned to its wealth. For the kinglings of Man, however, it was at least a convenience to be on cordial terms with an Abbot who exercised a sovereignty almost equal to their own in the little island towards which Barrow nowadays sends its weekly freight of tourists.

The number of monks attached to Furness seems not to have exceeded thirty. For them the more strictly conventional parts of the Abbey were certainly large enough. They sat in the choir of the church, conversed and ate in the refectory or day room, and slept in the dormitories over the day room. But besides these monks there were many score of lay brethren who found their livelihood in the Abbey estates—sufficiently extensive—and from the nave of the great church participated in the gorgeous services of Catholicism in its most florid era. One can people the Abbey precincts with them and their kindred, and give the picture a pretty touch in the children going and coming between the tenants' houses and the monastery, in which they were taught to sing and cypher. We have it on the best authority that these tenants or retainers of the Abbey received weekly out of the Abbey stores "sixty barrels of ale or beer, every barrel containing ten gallons or thereabouts

—that the tenants had also weekly thirty dozens of coarse wheat bread, and sufficient iron for their ploughs and other utensils of husbandry, and timber for repairing their houses; that every tenant having a plough had two persons to come to dinner one day in every week, from Martinmas to Pentecost; and that it was lawful for the tenants to send their children to school in the monastery, and such children were allowed to come into the hall every day either to dinner or supper." Nor was this all. Two pounds weekly was distributed among these happy folk, in addition to the above substantial rations. The tenants were, of course, in a state of vassalage; but there seems good reason to believe the rule of the Abbots of Furness was mild compared with that of the barons of the land, or even with that of other large monastic houses at special epochs.

Langland, in his "*Piers Plowman*," was justified in rating certain monasteries for their abuses; but houses of the eminence of Furness cannot be classed with those upon which the eloquent ex-monk expends such rare powers of diatribe and malediction.

The guest room nowadays stands open to the winds. A group of hale young sycamores hob-a-nob in its eastern extremity, and the ditch already referred to runs through it diagonally. There is enough grass within its former enclosure to attract the modern hay-ward. But there is nothing at all to help us to reconstruct the scenes it saw evening after evening for centuries. Monsieur Jusserand, in his "*Wayfaring in England in the Fourteenth Century*," may supply that lack for those who crave an exact furnishing of the roofless and wall-less apartment. Perhaps it is not quite an affair of chance that this enclosure and the conventional refectory seem to be the most favoured resorts for the holiday-makers from Barrow with sandwiches and flasks in their pockets. Whether the brook or ditch which traverses the room now traversed it wholly or in part five hundred years ago, I know not; but it would assuredly have been useful then for the grime-stained pedlars and others who looked to the Abbot of Furness for a night's lodging and some plain food. Only the regular monks of the Abbey drank wine, we are told. But doubtless there was good ale and water for these pauper itinerants as well as for the monastery vassals.

The reddish sandstone of which the Abbey is built—this is the region for hematite—has withstood wind and weather marvellously. Only in few places has it

been harshly used. The decorated work—from gargoyles to capitals and beaded archways—as we see it now, proves the conscientiousness of the old masons no less than the protected situation of the Abbey. The ruin will cast a ruddy glow on the green grass of midsummer for many a generation yet to come; and if a forecast in exact keeping with present events may be offered, a hundred years hence men and women will continue to come hither to read their newspapers and novels, smoke cigars, nurse their babes, and whisper tender words in each other's ears beneath the long shadow of the gaunt church walls.

For one thing the sentimental visitor ought to be thankful. The railway, though almost as near to the ruins as to Conway Castle, in Wales, discreetly obliterates itself. At the worst, its engines do but give forth a muffled, respectful screech as they glide from the Abbey station in the hollow towards the open country at the extremity of which, seawards, lies Barrow, in the territory over which of yore the Abbots of Furness exercised lordship.

For four centuries Furness Abbey was a great name and power in the north of England. Then the Dissolution of the Monasteries began.

Threats come which no submission may assuage,
No sacrifice avert, no power dispute;
The tapers shall be quenched, the belfries mute,
And, 'mid their choirs unroofed by selfish rage,
The warbling wren shall find a leafy cage,
The gadding bramble hang her purple fruit,
And the green lizard and the gilded newt
Lead unmolested lives, and die of age.

These words of Wordsworth are no more applicable to Furness than to the other Abbeys of the land; and, also, no less applicable.

On the ninth of April, 1537, the Abbot and his Prior and twenty-eight monks met in the Chapter House for the last time, and signed away what might almost be called their second birthright. From Furness the Abbot condescended to the living of Dalton, near the Abbey, where he existed with bumbled head on some thirty or forty pounds of income per annum.

AGENTS OF DESTRUCTION.

It is sufficiently curious that the march of civilisation is marked by the perfecting of instruments of destruction. Science is constantly striving to devise that which will destroy what Science is constantly striving to construct. We build an iron-clad floating-battery replete with all the

machinery and mechanical devices that the skill of man, after the concentrated application of centuries, is able to contrive; and then we immediately proceed to invent something that will hurl the whole contrivance into space in the swiftest possible manner. Like our old school-friends, Balbus and Caius, we are ever building walls and pulling them down again.

And perhaps few of us realise how large an effect upon the destinies of the world is exercised by gunpowder. In the rivalry of nations to possess the most powerful explosive that can be produced, there is industrial as well as scientific competition. And in the struggle for existence among nations the possessor of the most powerful destroying agent must always occupy a place of advantage. This rivalry has brought about a curious condition of modern warfare. Nations do not so often face each other with gun and sword as they do with plans of ingenious inventions of destruction. They are all engaged in a campaign the object of which is alternately to produce an armour that nothing can pierce, and something that will shatter that impenetrable armour. We have arrived at such a point of extravagant outlay in this pursuit, that a steel-clad target is constructed at the cost of several thousands of pounds merely to be shot at by a gun which costs several thousands more, and every discharge of which costs several hundreds! If Roger Bacon really invented "villainous saltpetre," he never dreamed of it being put to such uses.

Whoever invented gunpowder certainly revolutionised the art of warfare. Muscular force gave way to chemical action, skill in arms was replaced by skill in armaments. The sword was not beaten into ploughshares but into gun-metal, and the stone of the sling of the primitive savage became the ball of the cannon.

Yet the ancients had some knowledge of science, too, and in the Greek-fire of old we may find the germ of the explosive shell. The invention of Greek-fire is usually ascribed to Callinicus, about the time of the siege of Constantinople by the Moslems. With this fire he worked miraculous destruction among the invading fleet. What its composition was is not now exactly known, but chemists are of opinion that it was a combination of saltpetre, resin, and sulphur. If so, the idea may somehow or other have reached Greece from China, for the Chinese claim to have been acquainted with the powers of saltpetre in the remote

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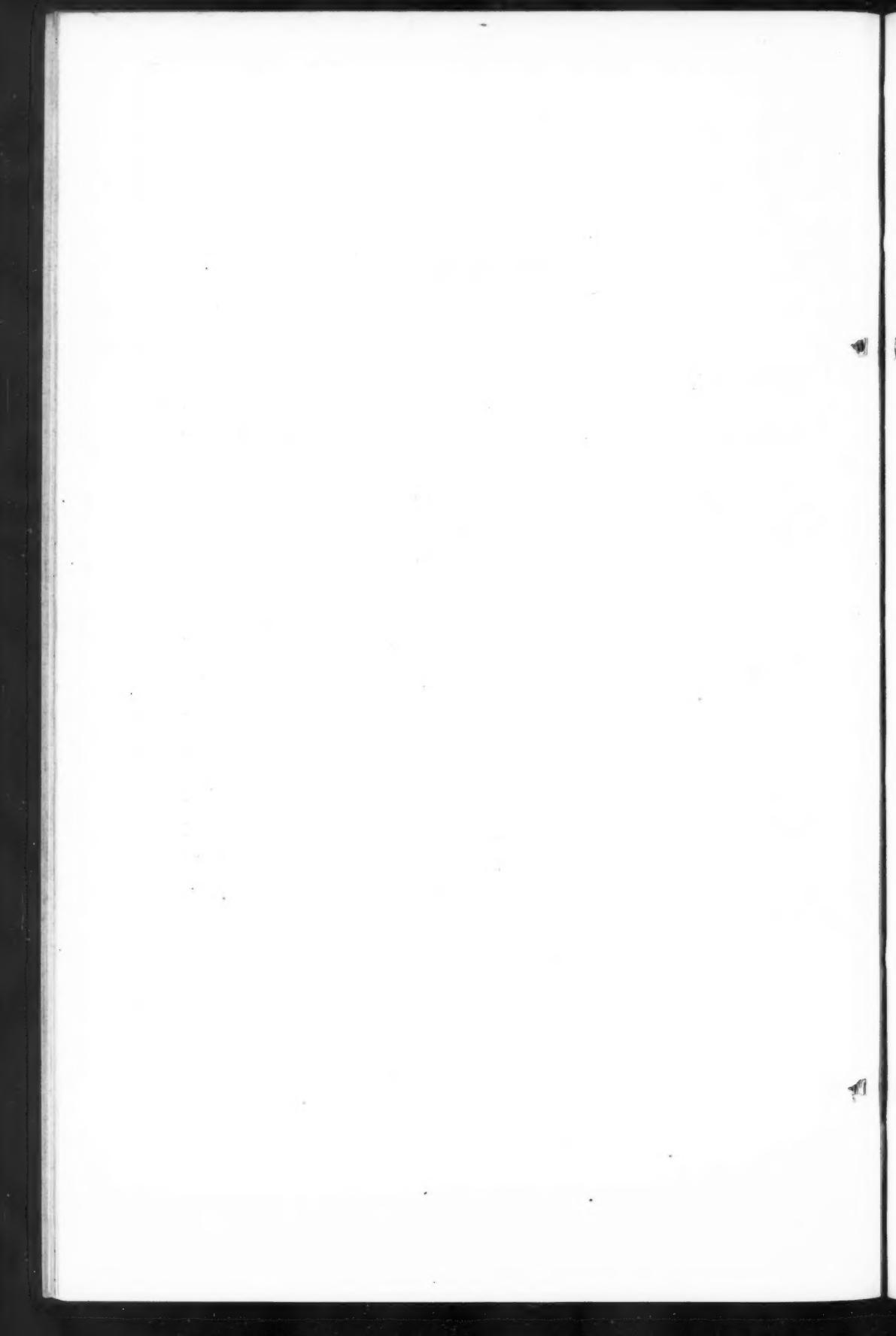
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centuries before the Christian era. Whatever Greek-fire was composed of, it was discharged from tubes, and must, therefore, have had projectile as well as incendiary properties.

Although gunpowder is said to have been first used in warfare in Europe at the battle of Crecy, Prescott says that it was employed by the Moorish King of Granada at the siege of Baza, in 1312; that it is mentioned in an Arab treatise of 1249; and that a Spanish manuscript of the eleventh century mentions artillery as in use at a naval engagement between the Moors of Tunis and the Moors of Seville of that period. Perhaps, however, what the Moors derived from the Arabs was only a form of the combustible which Callinicus used at Constantinople, for, according to Marcus Græcus, Greek-fire was in the tenth century propelled by its own gas in the form of rockets.

Thus, before the invention of gunpowder, as we know it, something in the nature of artillery was used for the projection of Greek-fire, and as we know from various sources, vinegar was used to put out the fire. But it did not throw a projectile, and the great object of the fighting animal, man, was to obtain a force that would hurl a destructive missile to a great distance, while the thrower remained in comparative security.

Now the first known formula for the composition of gunpowder is said to occur in an Arabic manuscript of the thirteenth century, where the ingredients are given as ten parts of saltpetre, two parts of charcoal, and one and a half part of sulphur. This was not a very efficient mixture, and when, in the first half of the following century, cannon came into use in Europe—small arms were somewhat later—the composition seems to have been something like ten per cent. of sulphur, fifteen per cent. of charcoal, and seventy-five per cent. of saltpetre. This was reduced to dust, and it got so mixed with dirt and other matter as to be very uncertain in its effects; for which reason it was slow, at first, in coming into favour in European warfare.

The first cannon were of wood bound with leather, and then iron hoops were introduced. From the use of iron hoops to the use of iron entirely was an easy transition, but brass cannon were for long the most esteemed. Some of the brass guns of the fifteenth century are said to have been capable of throwing stone

balls weighing over six hundredweight. Such a gun was employed in 1449 by Mahomet the Second in besieging that very city of Constantinople which eight hundred years previously had been defended with Greek-fire. Breech-loading cannon were used by Cortez in Mexico in 1519, and were in existence in England in 1545. But they were soon given up, and muzzle-loading was adopted until quite recent times.

To return, however, to gunpowder. This, as we have said, was at first produced and used in the form of dust, but in time it was perceived that the explosive power was greater when the powder was granular. This led to investigations of the size of grain, kind of glazing, and other details which affect the explosive and projectile quality of the composition. Then changes in the character of the guns used necessitated changes in the condition of the powder. Thus when, after the Crimean War, rifled cannon were introduced, a new quality of powder had to be devised; and as the size of guns went on increasing up to the mammoth hundred-and-ten-tonners, the chemical composition of the gunpowder required constant study.

The immense expense of big guns necessitated another consideration besides the throwing of the missile with the greatest possible velocity to the greatest possible distance; and this was that the powder should exercise a less degree of pressure on the gun so as to reduce wear and tear to a minimum. To-day, then, the scientific artillerist looks to the scientific manufacturer of gunpowder to provide him with a composition which must be nicely adjusted to the size and character of the gun, the weight of the missile to be projected, and the force at which the projection is desired. Many different classes of powder are now required for the various classes of guns.

The use of glazing in preserving the grains from the action of the air and facilitating transport, seems to have been discovered two or three hundred years ago, but it was not until the American Civil War that the advantage of large oblong grains, about an inch long, for the charging of smooth-bore guns, was found. Nowadays the size of grain varies very much with the size of gun, but the favourite shape of the grain is hexagonal. The explosive shell was invented towards the end of last century, and the efforts of men are now being directed to produce more deadly and

destructive effects with this shell than has been possible with a gunpowder filling. Torpedoes were used during the Crimean War, and are still, as then, charged with gunpowder, but in a much more ingenious and efficacious fashion, with complicated machinery for regulating the propulsion and explosion under water.

The great disadvantage of gunpowder in warfare is the smoke created by the discharge. Some military critics, it may be remarked, are of opinion that the smoke has quite as great compensating advantages, and at some military manœuvres smoke was purposely caused in order to conceal the movements of the troops. But for many years past the efforts of scientists have been bent on the production of an absolutely smokeless powder. Several so-called smokeless powders have been produced, but they are not absolutely smokeless. What is called smokeless powder is obtained by using nitrate of ammonia instead of saltpetre, straw charcoal instead of wood charcoal, and a smaller proportion of sulphur.

Some thirty years ago a smokeless powder was introduced into the Austrian Army, which was thought a great success—for a time. It was made of gun cotton, in long strips not unlike the shape of modern cordite; but it could not be kept for any length of time, and the factory blew up. This difficulty of preservation seems to apply to all or nearly all the smokeless powders yet introduced, as their tendency is to absorb moisture. The smoke from the discharge of gunpowder consists of finely divided particles of sulphate and carbonate of potassium, and amounts to about fifty per cent. of the total products of combustion, the other products being gaseous. The idea of smokeless powder is that the products of combustion should be entirely gaseous, and the employment of quick-firing guns has made such a result more and more desirable.

In the effort to obtain smokeless gunpowder, we have procured three new powerful explosives, namely, blasting gelatine, reputedly the most powerful of all known explosives; dynamite, considered the cheapest; and gun-cotton, said to be the safest to handle. The characteristic of these three explosives is that they instantaneously and totally explode, while gunpowder burns and pushes its way. Taking the last named first, we find the germ of gun-cotton in the experiments of the French chemist, Pélouze, so long ago as 1838. These experiments had reference to the action of strong nitric

acid on starch, sawdust, and paper, in causing them to burn with great rapidity. Seven years later the Germans Schönbein and Böttger actually made gun-cotton, and proclaimed its superior explosive energy to gunpowder. The difficulty, however, was to keep it, and to regulate the rate of combustion; and it was not until comparatively recent years that Sir Frederick Abel showed how gun-cotton can be made and kept without danger or deterioration, if washed free of superfluous acid.

Just about the same time as gun-cotton was made by the two Germans, the explosive quality of nitro-glycerine was discovered, but it was not until 1860 that Alfred Nobel's patent brought it into practical use, and it is from nitro-glycerine that we have obtained dynamite and blasting gelatine.

Dynamite is nitro-glycerine so mixed with powdered silica as to absorb about three-fourths of the moisture of the glycerine. The silica employed is a porous earth called "kieselguhr," which is found in Hanover, and which consists of the shells of microscopic animalcules. By absorbing the explosive nitro-glycerine liquid in this earth the danger of carrying it about in a liquid form was avoided, and yet the mixture produced proved more explosive than nitro-glycerine itself. But owing to the admixture of this "kieselguhr" there is necessarily a considerable proportion of inert matter in dynamite, and the next discovery was that by dissolving nitrated cotton in nitro-glycerine, the latter lost its fluidity, and a jelly-like composition was formed that could be moulded or rolled into sheets. This is what is now known as Nobel's Blasting Gelatine, and is reputed to be the most powerful explosive in existence.

There have been numerous other combinations of nitro-glycerine which have been tried at different times—such as nitro-glycerine and nitrate of soda, forming what was called Lithofracteur; nitro-glycerine and sulphur, forming what was called Vigorite; and nitro-glycerine and sawdust, forming what was called Vulcan powder. A blasting gelatine has also been obtained by a mixture of gly-oxylin and foreite, with the addition of paraffin to make it waterproof. A composition called Atlas Powder was obtained by using wood-pulp to absorb the moisture of nitro-glycerine; and another called nitro-magnite was obtained by saturating magnesia with nitro-glycerine.

All these are highly explosive materials,

as may be judged from the fact that while after combustion gunpowder has sixty-eight per cent. of solid residue, nitro-glycerine has no solid residue. Nitro-glycerine contains more than enough oxygen to burn up all the other constituents, and that is why other substances can be added to it which help to regulate the combustion.

Some twenty years ago the French chemist Désignolle discovered that a mixture of saltpetre and potassium-picrate produced an effective bursting charge for torpedoes and shells, but later Sir Frederick Abel discovered that an ammonium picrate produced still better results. These discoveries directed a great deal of attention to picric acid, and by-and-by Dr. Sprengel found that this acid was itself capable of being detonated by the use of fulminate of mercury. Some ten years ago the Turpin patent was taken out for the use of picric acid for shells and torpedoes—one of the processes being to render the acid less sensitive by melting and pouring it while in a melted state into the shells.

A peculiarity of fulminate of mercury is that it produces a shock to which all other substances are sensitive, and its supreme value as an explosive rests in this fact, and in the known liability of all explosives to be detonated by more or less distant explosions. There is a current of sympathetic influence in these terrible chemical compositions that is as strange as it is dangerous. What is required to produce explosion is the rapid generation of great heat along with large quantities of oxygen. In gunpowder, for instance, the nitrate of potash—saltpetre—which is the chief ingredient is practically imprisoned oxygen, and when it is decomposed along with charcoal, an immense heat is developed which causes the gases to expand suddenly—hence explosion.

One of the most recently invented explosives is melinite, which is a composition of gun-cotton, picric acid, and gum arabic, and is said to be three times as powerful as gunpowder. Picric acid is formed by the action of nitric acid on carbolic acid. Melinite powder was designed for use in the Lebel magazine-rifle, and also in those mysterious shells about which so much was recently heard in France.

What are known as "Sprengel Explosives" are mixtures of two prepared liquids, or of a liquid and a solid, kept separate for transport, and brought together when required for use. Such are Rackarock, a mixture of chlorate of potash

and petroleum, such as was used for the blasting of the Hellgate rocks at the entrance of New York Harbour; Hellhoffite, a mixture of nitrate tar-oil with strong nitric acid; and Oxonite, a mixture of picric acid and nitric acid. None of these are allowed to be used in England because of their extreme sensitiveness to friction.

There is a class known as "Safety Explosives," of which the base is usually a nitro-naphtha mixed with ammonia or potash. Some of these are known as Bellite, Securite, Roburite, and Ammonite.

In the case of Roburite, a German chemist, Carl Roth, hit upon the idea of introducing a little chlorine into the mixture, so as to reduce the temperature at explosion and prevent flame. It is a composition of nitrate of ammonia and chlorinated nitrobenzol, each of which is non-explosive by itself, and only explosive in combination, which is not effected until just before use. The peculiarity of Roburite, and some other of the new explosives, is that it cannot be exploded by either fire, percussion, or electricity, and that even if mixed with gunpowder it is unaffected by the firing of the powder. Roburite can only be exploded by means of a small quantity of fulminate of mercury, which is inserted into the cartridge just before use. It is chiefly employed for blasting in mines.

The name of deadly explosives now is legion, and the present object of science seems to be to find the best construction of exploding shell to do the greatest amount of damage at the longest range. As a filler of bombs and shells and torpedoes the days of gunpowder are numbered. There is another change, too, in the character of shells. Instead of a ball of great strength to penetrate heavy armour and then explode, the aim is to produce a thin shell of large size that will shatter without penetrating the object fired at. Thus a shell has been made filled with gun-cotton saturated with paraffin, the explosive action of which is so tardy that the shell can be forced right into thick armour before it explodes, with terrific effect; while shells filled with picric acid, or melinite, can be thrown by mortars so as to operate with even greater effect from the outside. The Americans have perfected a pneumatic-gun with which they can throw a charge weighing six hundred pounds of dynamite and blasting gelatine; and this gun can, it is said, be used with any explosive, without the risk of premature explosion to

which ordinary guns are more or less liable.

The problem which is chiefly occupying experts just now is how to produce the most destructive shell, allied with the most perfect method of explosion.

SAM PENDARN'S LADY DAUGHTER.

A COMPLETE STORY. CHAPTER I.

It was in the early part of the present century, when Waterloo was still fresh in people's minds, and "Old Boney" was still a name to frighten children with, when railways were as yet unknown, and the "Flying Western" coach took close on twenty-four hours with good roads and fair weather between London and the cross-roads at the back of the common, that Sam Pendarn's "lady" daughter became one of the population of Halcombe Quay.

How often the tale had been told in the red-curtained bar of the "Fishermen's Arms" there is no reckoning. It was the landlord's favourite story, and no stranger ever came to Halcombe that did not hear it. If he had not already noticed, and become subject to, Caroline Pendarn's dark eyes and graceful figure, the story would awake in him a lively curiosity to come across the heroine of so remarkable a tale; if, as was more likely, he had already seen Miss Pendarn, the story had for him a double interest.

"I du mind the night now," the landlord would say musingly, between the puffs of his long pipe. "Lord! how it did blow, to be sure! It was just gone eight o'clock by the old clock that's hangin' now in the kitchen yonner, when they rush in, several on 'em, and tell me as there's a ship a-goin' to pieces on the Black Spit, wot's just beyond West Point, d'yu mind?—betwixt Halcombe and Rymouth. An' goin' to pieces she was, tu, sure-ly. No ship as ever putt to sea cud live there long, on such a night. There she lay, bumpin' an' thuddin' an' grindin' of herself upon the rocks—that loud that we cud hear the smashin' of her more'n a hundred yard away, through all the tearin' of the wind and the boom of the gurt waves upon the shingle—with her masteses a-hangin' alongside, an' the sea washin' clean over her, an'—there! 'twas cruel work to see, so 'twas! An' there was we, a-stannin' on the beach as 'elpless as babbies, twenty or thirty on us, an' nothin' to be done; for we cudn't putt off no

boo-ut in a sea like that, let alone them aboard the ship. An' so she broke up—Lord 'elp them! There was never a one of them come ashore—not one.—Wull, when 'twas all over, an' there were nothin' more to be done, we was walkin' back steady along the beach—me an' Sam Pendarn, an' Josephus—him as used to be a Preventive, with one arm—an' a mort more of us—when Josephus he stops sudden and he says, says he, 'I du allow that were somebody screechin' over there!' Wull, we listened, an' we hurd it tu, then. An' what think you it were? Why, a babby! Lyin' just above where the waves come in, well-nigh smothered in foam an' sea-wid, an' soaked through with watter, but with life in her for all that. How she come alive through that boilin', ragin', thunderin' sea—an' not lashed on to anything, neither, mind you—was a reg'lar Providence. Howsumever, we car'ed her along with us, and she come round wonnferful; an' then Sam, bein' easy-like in his circumstances of life and lonesome with his own little boy, he tuk care of her an' brought her up as his own. An' a fine-grown gell she is, tu, an' does credit to him, I warrant.—We never foun' out the name of the ship, nor wot people the babby might belong to. There was wreckage come ashore, an' bodies, tu, but nothin' to judge by. They did say as how she were from the West Indies, boun' for Bristol port; but I hurd tell as there weren't no babby on board of her, so it cudn't well be her, I'm thinkin'."

And the landlord of the "Fishermen's Arms" would take a long pull at his pipe, and shake his head sagaciously half a score of times before he brought the tale to a conclusion by remarking that it was a mortal queer story altogether, and that they did say Sam Pendarn's "lady" daughter was a real lady born, and shud likely be a duchess or some one of the quality in some furrin part, if she had her rights an' foun' out the people as she belonged to.

It was probably in deference to this view of her origin that she had acquired the name, by which she was known throughout Halcombe and the neighbouring parts, of Sam Pendarn's "lady" daughter. When, or by whom, the name had first been given to her, must ever be a question unsolved. The fact remains that, whether by reason merely of the romantic possibilities underlying the strange discovery of the nameless child on that

stormy night, or of the fabled value of a trinket that was found around her neck, or, as some more ungenerously hinted, of the somewhat haughty and overbearing character that Caroline Pendarn had developed during her upgrowing, she had from childhood enjoyed the reputation of being "a somebody," who should be possessed of boundless wealth if only she "had her rights."

Caroline herself believed implicitly in the correctness of this conclusion. It was perhaps as much as anything her almost unconscious assumption of superiority over the simple folk of Halcombe, her unquestioning acceptance of their tribute of respect, that had led them to extend the idle fireside speculation of twenty years ago until it became a popular conviction. There was, in fact, in this coincidence a mutual connection of cause and effect. It was, no doubt, the childish jests of her school-mates, echoing their elders' gossip, that had first planted in her mind the seeds of that feeling that she was somehow different from themselves; it was that feeling, maturing and fructifying in a certain haughtiness of manner and superiority of tone, that seemed so strikingly to corroborate the theories that had in reality been its origin.

In truth, Caroline Pendarn, at two-and-twenty, with her tall figure and stately bearing, her dark, handsome face and flashing eyes, her readiness of tongue and gentility of manner, presented so striking and so picturesque a contrast to the ordinary young womanhood of Halcombe, that a very stranger might be expected to weave some sort of romance out of such very promising materials.

As the Rector remarked more than once to old Sam Pendarn: "She is a very superior girl, Pendarn—very superior. It is odd how it all falls in with what we thought at first. But then, you know, birth will assert itself. You can always depend upon that."

And the Rector stroked his white hands softly, complacent in the reflection that birth had at any rate asserted itself unmistakeably in his own portly person.

The Reverend Samuel Draper had played no small part in the history of the orphan babe who had become known to the world as Caroline Pendarn.

Though still a young man, and almost fresh from Oxford, at the time when—not long before the night of that eventful storm—he had accepted the college living of

Halcombe, and settled down among its inhabitants, he had yet soon secured their respectful appreciation as a man of learning and resource. In none of his actions was the latter quality more conspicuous than in the ready manner in which he settled the much-disputed question of the name that should be given to the storm-baby.

"Let her be called Caroline," he had said, with a wave of the white hands. "It is a name that is respected, I trust, by each one of us. What name could be more meet for the little lost one?"

And so it was settled; and he himself became the baby's godfather.

It was no doubt due to this fact that he took a sort of proprietary interest in the little Caroline. He extended his patronage to her with marked indulgence, held her up to the village children—with greater frequency, perhaps, than discretion—as a noteworthy example of propriety and intelligence, lent her books in abundance from the Rectory book-shelves, personally superintended the completion of her education at the village school. Nor did the theory as to her birthright suffer at his hands. He was a man of no very high order of intellect, to whom a local mystery, with ample opportunity for speculation and discussion, came as a welcome relief from the monotony of the life at Halcombe Quay; and this mystery, in particular, shed an agreeable lustre of romance upon his parish that seemed to him to be by reflection not unbecoming to its Rector. Moreover, it was more pleasing to his susceptibilities, as well as more impressive to the parishioners, that his god-daughter should be suspected of no ignoble parentage. So that, during the whole of her upgrowing, he had fostered, rather than checked, the popular disposition to regard Caroline Pendarn as somebody "more than the usual."

In fine, it had been the frequently avowed intention of the Rector, as well as that of his good lady at the Rectory, to make the young woman a not unworthy occupant of any station which she might one day, please Heaven, be called upon to fill. But, while admitting to the full the benevolence and praiseworthiness of this intention, there is grave reason to doubt whether the means adopted for its accomplishment had not done much to blemish a really attractive character, and to convert a naturally proud nature into a disposition of such unreasonable haughtiness, that the half of Halcombe who did not scoff at it went in mortal fear of its scathing outbursts.

The Rector had been one of the first to examine the trinket that was found on the little one's neck—a locket set with a single stone and hung from a slender chain—and he had pronounced it to be in his opinion of considerable value. He had even talked dubiously of the King's right of wreck and of his duties as a magistrate; but nothing had come of it. The trinket had been kept mighty cautiously by old Sam Pendarn in the oaken locker under his bed, until one day, when Caroline was close on sixteen years of age, she had astounded him by suddenly demanding it, quietly but imperiously. Since then few eyes had seen it, but rumour gave out that she wore it constantly under her dress; and the wise-acres of Halcombe wagged their heads and wondered querulously "what the gell wanted fur to do, carryin' about that thing on her, as passon said were worth a sight o' money?"

But to young Sam Pendarn she had confided her true reason—that as it was a clue which might lead one day to the discovery of her parentage, she thought it only right to keep the locket in her own custody and under her own control. And Sam had answered that she was always right, and there was a deal in what she said.

From which it will be seen that young Sam did not share in the superior tone and education of his "lady" sister.

"Young" Sam—as he was known throughout the parish in contradistinction to "old" Sam Pendarn, now a shaky and somewhat morose old man, much addicted to the secret hoarding of money and the public protestation of extreme poverty—had succeeded to his father's business of village carpenter, boat-builder, and undertaker. He was a strapping young fellow of twenty-eight—Caroline's senior by six years—very strong, very healthy, very modest, and very monosyllabic. It may have been his modesty, or it may have been his monosyllabic proclivities, that had prevented him from telling that to Caroline Pendarn, which for five long years his heart had been nursing and cherishing and aching over. That is to say, had prevented him from telling her verbally; for we may be sure that the blundering young man had communicated his secret a thousand times by look and act and gesture to her woman's instinct. And all the village knew that "Sam was courtin' his sister Caroline; but the gell thought herself too good for him, to be sure."

All of which was true. For, though young Sam had been her willing slave and

her champion in their school-days; though he had joyfully taken the daily burden of her lesson books and slate, and had carried her on his shoulder across the little Rye, when the stream was swollen with the winter's snows and the plank bridge had been washed from its muddy bearings; though he had fought and thrashed many a boy whose gibes at her "foreignengineering face" had brought the tears into her eyes; ay, though he had often stood between her and his father, when old Sam was troubl'd with one of his fits of surly anger, and had taken upon himself the credit and the consequences of her youthful delinquencies; and though, in later days, he had held himself steadily aloof—and Caroline knew why—from the tempting smiles and seductive arts of the village maidens, and had been blind in particular to the barefaced encouragement of that odious Polly Tredfillick, the schoolmaster's daughter; though Caroline was only too keenly conscious of all these things, there was yet the mystery of her parentage, the probability—as she told herself—of her lofty origin, the horror of an alliance with the village carpenter, should that origin be too late discovered, that haunted her restlessly by day and night, that closed her lips in haughty silence when she would fain have spoken, that stood always like a cold spectre between her and young Sam Pendarn.

And yet—it must be confessed now, whether or no she had ever had the courage to confess it to herself—Caroline Pendarn was in love with young Sam.

CHAPTER II.

THE sun was sinking behind the heaving level of waters. Away on the left, three headlands off, the dusky outline of the Black Spit jutted out jaggedly, its sombre clefts and ragged crags stricken with a blacker hue than ever in the failing light. The fitful wind blew coldly and gustily from the setting sun, raising faint specks of foam far out to sea and long white lines of surf at the cliff's foot. A thin, ghostly mist was stealing up from the narrow rock-bound inlet on the right, where Halcombe Quay lay nestled in the sheer declivity of the hills. And Caroline Pendarn stood beside the stile that straddled across the cliff-path on the brow of the West Point, with all the bleakness of the gusty evening, and all the dreariness of the fading scene, pictured and reflected in her own disconsolate face.

There had been no quarrel, but there was a coldness, between her and young Sam Pendarn. A coldness, as she only too well knew, that had grown out of her own frosty speeches, her own chilling haughtiness of demeanour, her icy pride that would let her see only the village carpenter where she would fain have seen the lover. And Caroline, despite the fact that she had thrice that week snubbed young Sam with a bitter, cruel snub, that she had thrice stoutly resisted the advances of his halting boldness and had routed it each time with direful decisiveness—despite her victories, and her sense of duty done, and the triumph of her relentless pride—was very, very unhappy.

It was the Harvest Home that night at the big farm on Halcombe Common; and Caroline had refused to go. Young Sam would be there, she knew well; he had announced his intention of going—somewhat irritably, it must be confessed—after the last of those three bitter snubs that Caroline, in her self-abnegation, had administered to him for his reason's welfare; he had started, very jubilant and loud-voiced, half an hour before Caroline had commenced her solitary clamber to the top of the West Point; no doubt he would enjoy himself immensely, and never miss his "lady" sister, but dance—it might be—with Polly Tredfillick or some other young person of his own class, and come home very late and none the better for the eider.

So thought Caroline, in the bitterness of her spirit, as she leant against the tumble-down stile, with the chilly wind blowing through her thin dress, and the mist beginning to blot out the kindling lights of Halcombe in the valley. In the extremity of her mortification she went further. Went so far as to wish him happiness with Polly Tredfillick and to hope, with rare generosity, that she would make him a good wife and not carry on with the men quite so much as she had done in days gone by. But in the very moment when these last bitter thoughts flashed angrily through her head, there came a great throb of her heart in cruel contradiction to them, and Caroline Pendarn, with all her wrath dissolved, leant her forehead upon the top rail of the old stile and sobbed in all the unutterable wretchedness of wounded pride and self-condemnation.

Suddenly a guttural voice, speaking within three feet of the crown of her cruelly ill-treated hat—which was being crushed beyond recognition by the obdurate bar of

the stile—made her jump back in perilous proximity to the cliff's edge, panting with fear and shame.

"Eh! my dear," the voice said, "I'm truly sorry to see ye in such distress of mind. Those pretty eyes were never made for weeping with—my gracious, no! Only for smiling on the boys with, my dear, and laughing at 'em sometimes, too, I'll be bound.—But ye're never afeard of Old Sol, my dear?" as Caroline retreated nearer and nearer towards the cliff, with her hands pressed closely against her heaving bosom. "Old Sol as is such a favourite, and fancies you more than all the girls of the village put together, and lets you have his pretty things dirt cheap, just to see the pleasure shining out of your bright eyes. Ye're not afeard of Old Sol?"

And the little old humpbacked man whipped off with marvellous dexterity the heavy pack that he carried on his shoulders, and rested it on the top of the stile, where Caroline's tears were standing in little streaks of moisture, the while he looked at her out of his twinkling black eyes with an insinuating Israelitish smile. Old Sol—it was the name he gave himself, and no one knew any other—was in fact a pedlar, who hawked his miscellaneous pack of goods up and down the countryside. Few villages there were—nay, few hamlets—in the shire that did not know the sight of his broad, squat figure, bent under the oilskin pack and leaning on his long, crooked staff. Few village maidens there were that did not look out for Old Sol's visits, and reward the labour of his persuasive tongue by the purchase of ribbons, and kerchiefs, and tawdry jewellery; few housewives who could not point to at least one piece of crockery or tinware as "boughten of Old Sol." But of all the villages on his rounds none was more honoured by the constancy of his visits than Halcombe Quay; and of all the village maidens of Halcombe, none stood so high in his favour as Caroline Pendarn. Never a visit did he pay to those parts but he managed to have half an hour's gossip with Caroline; and, when old Sam had been more than usually stingy, and Caroline could only shake her head at the pedlar's gauds, he had been known—to the marvel of the village folk—to relax the obligation of payment till a future day, or even, on occasions, to forego it altogether. For the rest, Old Sol had the character of a kindly old man, though no doubt a bit of a rogue in the exercise of his calling, whose prin-

cipal failings—apart from professional roguery—were a want of personal cleanliness and an addiction to poaching; and Caroline, when she saw who the stranger was that had startled her, began to recover from her trepidation, and ceased to move towards the cliff's edge.

"Ye're never afeard of Old Sol, missy?" the old man continued in his wheedling tones. "Why, I can call to mind now how I used to carry ye about on my back astride of this pack of mine, and you thumping the old man with this very crooked stick. That was years ago, of course, my dear, and ye cared more for lollipops and comfits then than for necklaces and suchlike. But Old Sol he mostly found a comfit or two somewhere in the old pack for missy, now didn't he, my dear? Ain't it the solemn truth, now? And then to be afeard of Old Sol!"

"I wasn't afraid of you, Daddy," said the girl, using the title that he had taught her to give to him years ago. "You startled me, that was all."

"I'm truly sorry, my dear, I'm truly sorry," said the pedlar, clambering nimbly up the stile and seating himself comfortably with his little bowed legs astride of it, and his chin resting forward on the top of his pack. "I thought you was lonely, my dear, and might stand in need of a bit of cheering up. But what was the tears about? Not weeping for one of the boys, as should all be crying their blessed eyes out for you, was you, my pretty?"

"No, I wasn't," cried Caroline hotly, "and you know it well enough. There's no one in Halcombe that I need cry for, I assure you. I'm very grateful to everybody for what they've done; but I don't mean to cry about them."

"Of course not, my dear; of course not. It's not to be expected," croaked the pedlar, eyeing her fixedly. "But maybe ye'd fancy to look at some of the pretty things in my pack here, and that 'ud charm away the tears? I've some of the sweetest pretty things here, and all fresh from London town, where they are worn by the tip-top aristocrats, my dear—so 'elp me truly!—only Old Sol knows how to get them cheap and sell them cheap, and that's the blessed difference."

And in an instant the little old hunchback had slid off the stile, and was on his knees on the grass before the open pack.

"Now, I have a ribbon here," he went on rapidly, "a sweet pretty ribbon, as I must really put against that gown of yours.

Why, bless my heart, sooner than not see you with that ribbon, as 'ud match your pretty face like a blessed picture, I'd give it to ye, I would indeed, so 'elp me—"

"No, no," she said irritably, stemming the torrent of a speech she had heard full often before. "I don't want anything now, Daddy; and if I did, I have no money to pay for it."

The old man looked up at her with a shrewd twinkle in his beady eyes.

"Maybe, now, if I was to go to young Mr. Pendarn—" he was beginning, when Caroline sprang forward at him with her face aflame.

"I dare you to do it," she cried. "I dare you to do it. What's all this talk about me and Sam, I should like to know? As if I, who may be anybody—anybody—would think of Sam! Why, I'd sooner die as I am than marry—him!"

Caroline, it may be remarked, in losing her temper had lost also some part of that elegance of manner which was the Rector's pride, and she spoke now like the veriest country maid.

There was silence for a few instants after this outburst. The old pedlar was the first to break it.

"Maybe I might be able to tell you something of who you are," he said slowly.

"What can you tell me?" cried Caroline, with an angry toss of her head. "What can you tell me more than I know?"

Old Sol very deliberately filled and lighted a blackened stump of clay pipe which he had taken from his pocket, and drew his legs in under him as he squatted on the grass—but said nothing.

"What can you tell me?" she repeated, but less defiantly.

There was a pause again. The hunchback still sat in front of his open pack with his eyes fixed musingly on Caroline, sucking vigorously at his blackened clay, and apparently revolving in his mind some subject of deep consideration.

"I'll tell ye a little story, my dear," he said at last, "as comes into my mind at this instant. A true story, my dear—as true as ever was—and concerning this part of the coast hereabouts. Sit ye down, sit ye down."

Caroline took no notice of the invitation, and the pedlar proceeded.

"There was a gentleman as I used to know particularly well, who went his rounds hereabouts—a gentleman in my line of business, my dear, but very different from me. Oh, yes! very different from me.

Quite the gentleman in every way ; but affable and pleasant enough, for all that, and not above being friendly with an old man like me. Only he was very superior to Old Sol, you'll always remember, my dearie, won't you ?—very superior to Old Sol ! Mr. Smith he called himself, if my blessed memory's right, and he came from London town. A very superior gentleman for our line of business, my dear, very superior indeed !

Old Sol was evidently getting uncomfortable over his tale, and his eyes, which had hitherto been fixed steadily on Caroline's face, now rambled twinklingly over the grey expanse of sea and sky before him.

"He told me this tale, you'll understand, missy—this Mr. Smith did—several years ago. Oh, a many years ago it must have been, before he died. He's dead now, poor man. He had married a gipsy lady—a Spanish gipsy, my dear, of very good blood in her own country, so they said, and very handsome. Remarkably like your sweet self she was, if one may say so and no offence given. An extraordinary likeness, I've often thought ; and more and more of it as I've seen ye grow up. I used to meet her about with him, you see, my pretty one, so I ought to know, now oughtn't I ? She was useful to him in his business, and they got on very comfortable together, so they did, though she had her tempers, I'll not deny, and maybe he had his too. Well, things went on, and there was a blessed baby born ; and though he swore a bit, maybe—in a gentlemanly way, my dear, for he was always quite the gentleman—she managed the baby that wonderful that it never seemed to be in his way. But she couldn't stand the life of it winter-times, after her bringing up in foreign parts, and she was always weak-chested, poor thing ; and one bitter night's tramping she was struck with a chill, and it went on her lungs. She had been a good wife to him, upon my soul she had ; and when she died he went pretty near mad. Ye'll remember that, my dearie, won't ye, and not be too hard on him for what he did ?" He was looking very straight, almost eagerly, at her face now. "There was only him to take care of the blessed child, a year old or thereabouts, and—Lord have mercy on him !—he wished then that the child had died along with her mother. He was only a tramping pedlar like me—though very superior to Old Sol, my dear—and what what was the likes of him to do with a

child ?—Ye're following the story, my dear, and ye see how out of his blessed senses this man was ?" he broke off anxiously.

Caroline had been standing by the stile, half-leaning on it with one arm. Her head was bowed, and her face deadly pale. Now she looked up and spoke slowly, articulating the words as if with difficulty :

"Do you mean to say that that child was me ? If so, say so."

"Why, no, my dear," the old man rejoined hastily. "Bless my soul, no ; I don't say nothing. It's only a little story, as I told you. Wait until the end comes, my dear, and then you'll see all about it.—One night," he went on, "just after she was buried—she's in Fernycombe churchyard, my dear, over across the common—this Mr. Smith was tramping along the path here on the road to Halecombe, carrying the child strapped on to his pack behind—and a precious heavy weight it must have been for a man to carry on his back all day, now mustn't it, my dear ?—when he saw a ship on the rocks down below, and some men coming out from Halecombe along the beach. And then—he was very near out of his mind, you'll not forget, my dearie—an evil, wicked thought came over him. He unstrapped the blessed child, and wrapped her up as warm as he could, and scrambled, down the cliff-side. The men never noticed him. The night was too precious dark and wild for that. When he saw their lanterns turning back along the beach he put down the child near the water, but where the waves couldn't come to her, and he hid himself behind a rock and waited. He saw them take her up—so he told me—and then he knew that the child would be all right ; and he climbed up again to the path very quiet, and turned back to Rymouth and never came near to Halecombe no more. That's what he told me years and years ago, and it's been on my blessed mind to tell ye ever since. But don't you go to jump at conclusions. For mind you, I don't say as that child was you ; for that was all the blessed story as he told it to me, neither more nor less, so 'elp me truly ! Only it do seem precious likely, now don't it ? And if so be as it is, why, there's no call to be ashamed of young Mr. Pendarn, missy."

The pedlar relit his pipe, which had gone out, and pulled at his grizzled beard nervously, waiting for Caroline to speak.

"He is dead—this Mr. Smith ?" she asked suddenly, her white face still turned towards the ground.

"Oh yes, my dear, he's dead! Years and years ago. There ain't anything to be got out of him."

The girl was fumbling with something at her neck. All at once she advanced towards the pedlar with her hand outstretched.

"This locket?" she said, almost fiercely. "This was found around my neck that night. Does this look as if it belonged to a pedlar's child?"

The old man took it from her fingers and examined it closely in the fading light.

"Well, now, to my mind it does look uncommon like it," he said at last. "That was a line of goods as was, very popular about that time. Not in these parts, my dear, oh, no! not in these parts. It was too superior an article for these parts, and came too expensive; but in Exeter and such places we sold a many of them, and made a rare profit, too. Not but what it's a pretty-made thing and worth what we asked for it. But bless my soul, I call to mind as I've the blessed fellow to that locket in my pack now; and, if so be that you would like the pair—"

But without a word the girl had snatched the locket from his hand, and was running swiftly down the steep declivity of the path towards Halcombe.

The old pedlar remained sitting in the same position until his pipe was smoked through. Then he rose, knocked out the ashes of the pipe against the side-post of the stile, and readjusted the pack upon his stooping shoulders. His shaggy eye-

brows were knitted in deep thought, and he gazed intently down the slope towards the spot where Caroline Pendarn's light dress had fluttered out of sight in the gathering darkness.

"Poor girl!" he muttered to himself at last, as he took up the crooked stick and prepared to follow her footsteps down the path. "Poor girl! I'm afeard as she'll take on a bit at first. But it was just as well to tell her the truth; oh, yes! just as well. Only it wouldn't have done to let her think as it was me that left her on the beach that night. My gracious, no! She wouldn't have liked to have to think of Old Sol as her father! Not old Sol! Oh, no, not Old Sol! She wouldn't have liked that. Mr. Smith was a very superior man; she'll always remember that, and it'll be a comfort to her, poor child! And to think of her putting such a value on that bit of trumpery as I hung round her neck! Well, well!—She'll marry young Pendarn now, and he's a good lad. It was just as well to tell her the truth. But I doubt she'll bear Old Sol a grudge for lowering of her pride so sudden. It was very hard on her poor old father to have to be the one to do it, that it was! But there! I've done my duty by her now; and it's been upon my conscience these many years as perhaps I never quite did my duty by that girl—not as her father should. It's been upon my conscience somehow, it has indeed.—But she'll marry Sam Pendarn fast enough now. Oh, yes! she'll marry Sam Pendarn now."

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To J. T. DAVENPORT, London.

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